

Trinidad Express, April 25, 2010.

I'm getting my documents together to apply for a tourist visa, but I heard that there's some new online system to apply. Can you inform me about the procedure so I can do it right one time?

Angel in Gonzales

This is an important question. Now you may use an online application system, called the DS-160, if you would like to apply for a visa at the US Embassy in Port of Spain. The DS-160 is required for applicants for all visas except the B1/B2 tourist visa as of April 19, 2010 and will be required for ALL visa applicants starting May 1, 2010.

The DS-160, available at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>, will allow you to do the entire application online. All of the information you put on the paper application (DS-156, DS-157, etc.) will now be entered into a software application. Depending on the type of visa you need, the DS-160 will ask you different questions to obtain the information that it needs for your application.

It could take as long as an hour to answer all of the questions depending on the kind of visa you need so be prepared to spend some time. Applicants should, at a minimum, gather the following personal information: Basic biographic information (name, address, nationality, phone number), details of any lost or stolen passports, details of any travel plans, information about who is paying for your trip and traveling with you, names of immediate family members in the US, names and addresses of spouse and minor children, names and addresses of all employers and schools attended beyond primary school, names of other countries visited in the past five years, details of military service, basic medical and criminal records, and details of any immigration violations.

While you are answering the questions click the "Save" button frequently. That way if you don't have time to finish or need to gather more information, then you can just log back in to the DS-160 and pick up where you left off. If you do not click "Save", then you will need to start over.

When you have entered all of the requisite information you will be taken to a Confirmation page to submit your application. Then you will be allowed to print your application's confirmation sheet. The confirmation sheet has your unique barcode which you not only need to make a visa appointment but must also bring to your non-immigrant visa appointment. Please note that you do not need to print the entire application, just the confirmation page.

Despite all of these changes, some things will stay the same. For instance, you still must pay the application fee at TT Post, bring the two original receipts to the interview, and make an appointment online at http://trinidad.usembassy.gov/step_3.html. Simply filling out the DS-160 will NOT book an appointment. And, if you cannot successfully upload a photo in the DS-160, then you will also need to bring one passport photo.

We recognize that this new application may be confusing, so if you have questions then you may visit our website at <http://trinidad.usembassy.gov>, send us an email at ConsularPOS@state.gov or call us between 2pm and 3pm on weekdays at 622-6371. And remember, the DS-160 is available at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.

We would also like to announce a change in our services for American citizens who are in Trinidad and Tobago. Starting on May 1, 2010, an appointment on our website (http://trinidad.usembassy.gov/appointment_system.html) is required for all of the following services:

- Applying for a U.S. passport
- Adding visa pages to a U.S. passport
- Applying for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- Returning to submit additional documents for a pending CRBA or Passport application
- Notarial Services
- Social Security and other Federal Benefit queries

The new appointment system for American Citizen Services is a U.S. Department of State requirement that is being implemented world-wide. If you are an American and have questions on the new appointment system or services available at the US Embassy in Port of Spain, please send an email to acspos@state.gov.